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PEKING 020

To: Henry A. Kissinger

From: Jenkins

1. Solomon can give you as full account of congressional delegation travels beyond Peking as you require (we discussed post-mortem at length and agreed) but I want to add a few observations from my perspective. Chinese placed me on all occasions third in line, after Magnuson and Morgan -- partly, I believe, in hope I could stem the avalanche of gaucheries and worse. Magnuson proved to be impressively accomplished at down right inventive ineptitude. None of the congressmen were willing to attack him head-on, though they did much grumbling among themselves. Actually, after Sian, first stop after Peking, little damage was done other than that occasioned by Magnuson attitude in general which came across as childish egocentrism, plus evident built-in feeling of American superiority on part of some others which caused the over-felicitous phraseology patting Chinese on head for their limited but promising accomplishments. In Sian dinner table Magnuson bragged to host he had had two hours with Chou and held other high-level substantive talks of very meaningful nature (not so). He said: "Chou En-lai (no title used) put his ministers at my disposal." Interpreter had good sense not to interpret this, but mumbled something about "he had some agricultural talks." Several Chinese at table understood English, however. At same table Magnuson discussed both Cambodia and Taiwan in unfortunate terms earlier used with Premier, even though he had been warned to avoid these subjects. Chinese were clearly insulted on several occasions, but took it all in ostensible good humor. They questioned me about how seniority system in Congress works, evidently in effort to understand the remarkable show they were witnessing.

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2. Except possibly for interview with Premier -- which may have hardened his position on Cambodia somewhat -- believe no permanent damage done, thanks in good measure to Chinese perceptivity of the problem. Although I don't think I showed it overtly, Chinese seemed to sense I was in pain, and on several occasions seemed to be purposefully demonstrative in concern for my comfort and happiness: it seemed to me that this was partly meant to be a message of some sort to the delegation.

3. During train travel (Nanking-Wushi-Sucdou-Shanghai) I was in special sitting room compartment with two leaders plus Sparkman and wives. Mrs. Sparkman was superb in asking just the right questions to facilitate the educative work I was attempting. Solomon and Romberg were a great help in this as in many matters as occasions permitted.

4. I believe one of the chief results of the trip was to reconfirm the Chinese belief in the superiority of their own system of government. Despite all the above, a generous amount of goodwill passed around, and some genuine mutual regard built steadily between our hosts and some of the delegation.

5. Warm regards.

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